



StrongSchoolsNC

What Are We Learning About Children and COVID-19?

LAST UPDATED 8/17/2020

*We are learning more every day regarding COVID-19 in children. We are using the latest research to help NC make decisions about how we should operate our schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. We will continue to follow new data and science as it is available to learn more. **The current research summarized below still presents an early and limited picture of children and schools during the COVID-19 pandemic.** Be sure to check back for regular updates by visiting <https://www.nc.gov/covid19>.*

Children may be less likely to have and spread COVID-19 than adults

- Children, particularly younger children, may be less likely than adults to become infected with COVID-19, even after being exposed to someone with COVID-19.
- Newer findings suggest that because of mild to no symptoms, there may be an undercount of actual number children infected and more cases in children have been detected recently.
- Children under 10 years of age may be less likely to spread COVID-19 to others than older teens and adults.
- Newer findings suggest that younger children may be able to spread virus more than originally thought
- Children may be more likely to get COVID-19 from an adult than to spread an infection to an adult
- Spread of COVID-19 is more likely within a household than not within a household (such as school)

Most children have very mild illness with COVID-19, but some have more severe symptoms and we are learning more about children who are at higher risk for infection or more severe illness

- Children infected with COVID-19 generally have mild or no symptoms.
- Although rare, some children can have severe disease, need hospitalization, and have developed multisystem inflammatory syndrome (MIS-C) after exposure to SARS-CoV-2.
- Children with underlying medical conditions are at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19.
- Our African American and LatinX communities and children are disproportionately affected by COVID-19.

Data from other countries does not show a large spread of COVID-19 associated with schools being open for instruction

- International data that are available show limited transmission in schools when a child was infected.
- While there have been some specific examples of spread in school, schools have not seemed to play a major role in the spread of COVID-19, especially in areas with low viral transmission.
- Overall, countries that have reopened their schools after infection rates had gone down did not see large rises in infection at a population level.

Less than 6 feet of social distancing may still be protective for children

- The CDC still recommends 6 feet of social distancing as the most health-protective distancing.
- However, in low- and medium-risk settings, 3 feet of social distancing may lead to a similar risk for the spread of COVID-19, especially when people wear cloth face coverings. Because of decreased risk of spread among children, schools may be considered low or medium risk.
- Keeping students spread out with more space in between them provides additional protection.

Learn More

Children may be less likely to have and spread COVID-19 than adults

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Preparing K-12 School Administrators for a Safe Return to School in Fall 2020. Updated July 23, 2020](#)

[CDC, Reported laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases and estimated cumulative incidence, by sex and age group — United States; January 22–May 30, 2020](#)

[CDC, MMWR: Morbidity Mortality Weekly Report, Coronavirus Disease 2019 in Children — United States; February 12–April 2, 2020.](#)

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report \(MMWR\) Hospitalization Rates and Characteristics of Children Aged < 18 years Hospitalized with Laboratory-Confirmed COVID-19 COVID-NET, 14 States, March 1-July 25, 2020](#)

[Children and COVID-19: State Data Report. A joint report from the American Academy of Pediatrics and Children's Hospital Association. July 30, 2020](#)

[Children and Fecal SARS-CoV-2 shedding: Just the tip of the iceberg of Italian COVID-19 outbreak? Digestive and Liver Disease July 18, 2020](#)

[Preprint. MedRxiv, Susceptibility to and transmission of COVID-19 amongst children and adolescents compared with adults: a systematic review and meta-analysis; May 24, 2020](#)

[Cluster of COVID-19 in northern France: A retrospective closed cohort study. April 23, 2020](#)

[SARS-CoV-2 infections in primary schools in northern France: A retrospective cohort study in an area of high transmission.](#)

[Balancing the Risks of Pupils Returning to Schools; Royal Society DELVE Initiative; July 24 2020](#)

[Contact tracing during coronavirus disease outbreak, South Korea, 2020. Emerg Infect Dis. July 16, 2020](#)
[COVID-19 in Children and the Dynamics of Infection in Families Pediatrics July 2020](#)

[JAMA Pediatric Age-Related Differences in Nasopharyngeal Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 \(SARS-CoV-2\) Levels in Patients with Mild to Moderate Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) July 30, 2020](#)

[BMJ Contact tracing during Phase 1 of the COVID-10 pandemic in the Province of Trento, Italy: key findings and recommendations. July 29, 2020](#)
[School Opening across globe suggest ways to keep coronavirus at bay, despite outbreaks. July 7, 2020](#)

[Prevent Epidemics, COVID-19 Weekly Science Review; June 20-26, 2020](#)

[Hospital Admission in Children and Adolescents With COVID-19. Early results from a national survey conducted by the German Society for Pediatric Infectious Diseases \(DGPI\) . May 2020](#)

[Nature, Coronavirus disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) in children and/or adolescents: a meta-analysis; June 17, 2020](#)

[CDC, COVID 19 Information for Pediatric Health Care Providers; May 29, 2020](#)

[DA International, Hospital Admission in Children and Adolescents With COVID-19, Early results from a national survey conducted by the German Society for Pediatric Infectious Diseases; May 5, 2020](#)

[BMJ Global Health, Reduction of secondary transmission of SARS-CoV-2 in households by face mask use, disinfection and social distancing: a cohort study in Beijing, China; May 11, 2020](#)

[Science, Changes in contact patterns shape the dynamics of the COVID-19 outbreak in China; June 26, 2020](#)

[American Academy of Pediatrics, COVID-19 Planning Considerations: Guidance for School Re-entry; June 25, 2020](#)

[World Health Organization, Considerations for school-related public health measures in the context of COVID-19; May 10, 2020](#)

Most children have very mild illness with COVID-19, but some have more severe symptoms and we are learning more about children who are at higher risk for infection or more severe illness
[Hospital Admission in Children and Adolescents With COVID-19. Early results from a national survey conducted by the German Society for Pediatric Infectious Diseases \(DGPI\) . May 2020](#)

[Children and Fecal SARS-CoV-2 shedding: Just the tip of the iceberg of Italian COVID-19 outbreak? Digestive and Liver Disease July 18, 2020](#)

[CDC, MMWR: Morbidity Mortality Weekly Report, Coronavirus Disease 2019 in Children — United States; February 12–April 2, 2020.](#)

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report \(MMWR\) Hospitalization Rates and Characteristics of Children Aged < 18 years Hospitalized with Laboratory-Confirmed COVID-19 COVID-NET, 14 States, March 1-July 25, 2020](#)

[Children and COVID-19: State Data Report. A joint report from the American Academy of Pediatrics and Children's Hospital Association. July 30, 2020](#)

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report \(MMWR\) COVID-19 – Associated Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children – United States, March-July 2020](#)

[CDC, MMWR: Morbidity Mortality Weekly Report, Coronavirus Disease 2019 in Children — United States; February 12–April 2, 2020.](#)

[Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in US Children and Adolescents. N Engl J Med, July 23, 2020
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Health Department-Reported Cases of Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children \(MISC-C\) in the United States July 15, 2020](#)

[Racial/Ethnic and Socioeconomic Disparities of SARS-CoV-2 Infection Among Children Goyal MK, et al. Pediatrics. Aug. 5, 2020](#)

Data from other countries does not show a large spread of COVID-19 associated with schools being open for instruction

[Cluster of COVID-19 in northern France: A retrospective closed cohort study. April 23, 2020](#)

[SARS-CoV-2 infections in primary schools in northern France: A retrospective cohort study in an area of high transmission.](#)

[A large COVID-19 outbreak in a high school 10 days after schools' reopening, Israel, May 2020. Euro Surveill.](#)

[Lancet Child Adolesc Health. Transmission of SARS-CoV-2 in Australian education settings: a prospective cohort study August 3, 2020](#)

[School Opening across globe suggest ways to keep coronavirus at bay, despite outbreaks. July 7, 2020](#)

[Prevent Epidemics, COVID-19 Weekly Science Review; June 20-26, 2020](#)

[American Academy of Pediatrics, COVID-19 Planning Considerations: Guidance for School Re-entry; June 25, 2020](#)

[Learning Policy Institute, Reopening Schools in the Context of COVID-19: Health and Safety Guidelines from other Countries](#)

[Center for Global Development, Back to School: An update on COVID cases as schools reopen; June 12, 2020](#)

[NCIRS, COVID-19 in schools- the experience in NSW; April 26, 2020](#)

[Lancet Child and Adolescent Health, School Closure and Management Practices During Coronavirus Outbreaks](#)

[Including COVID-19: A Rapid Systematic Review; April 6, 2020](#)

[Balancing the Risks of Pupils Returning to Schools; Royal Society DELVE Initiative; July 24 2020](#)

Less than 6 feet of social distancing may still be protective for children

[The Lancet, Physical distancing, face masks, and eye protection to prevent person-to-person transmission of SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19: a systematic review and meta-analysis; June 1, 2020](#)

[World Health Organization, Considerations for school-related public health measures in the context of COVID-19; May 10, 2020](#)